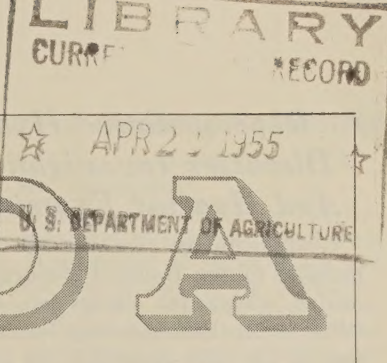
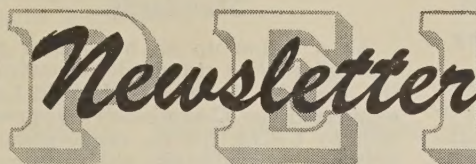
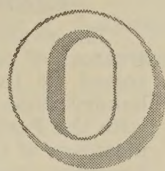


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ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES OF THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Vol. 7

MARCH, 1955

No. 1

# MEMBERSHIP DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR

## OPEDA Supports Morrison Plan

At its meeting on February 10, the OPEDA Council voted unanimously to disapprove the coordination of Civil Service Retirement and Social Security as proposed by the Kaplan Committee.

Instead the Council voted to support an increase in retirement benefits within the framework of the present CSR system. This support may be channeled through either of several bills introduced in the present Congress. The most comprehensive of these is H.R. 3791 introduced by Representative James Morrison (D., La.), a member of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee. H.R. 3791 contains the following provisions:

1. It would compute annuities by multiplying years of service by 2.5 percent (instead of the present 1.5 percent) of average salary during the employees' three (instead of five) best years.
2. It would allow retirement on full annuity after 30 years service, irrespective of the employee's age.
3. It would compute survivor and disability annuities as though the employee earned full retirement credits to age 60; provide that no such annuity shall be less than one-half of employee's average salary for the three best years; and provide that a widow's annuity would begin at once. Under existing law, a widow's annuity does not begin until age 50, unless there is a living dependent child.
4. It would discontinue the present reduced annuity that an employee is obliged to take if he chooses to establish a survivorship annuity for his wife. The present deductions are 5 percent of the first \$1,500 of the annuity, 10 percent of the remainder, plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  percent for each year the wife is under 60 at the time of the employee's retirement.

Legislative and Judicial employees already compute their retirement benefits with the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  percent multiplication factor, so that there is a precedent for this formula.

The Council believes that increasing retirement annuities within the framework of the present CSR system will provide greater long-run security

(Continued on Page 3)

## LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

By D. B. LASSETER,  
Executive Officer

**Pay Raise**—It now appears that a pay raise for classified Federal employees will be approved within the next 30 days. While the retroactive features are in doubt, it is possible that the raise may be as of January 1.

The present guessing in Washington is that the amount will range from the 6 percent proposed in the Murray Bill and the 10 percent in the bill sponsored by Senator Johnson. This puts the probable center somewhere between  $6\frac{1}{2}$  and 7 percent.

OPEDA has strongly recommended that adequate funds be supplied the agencies to meet the increases so that a rash of reductions-in-force will be avoided.

(Incidentally, the presentation of OPEDA's position before the congressional committees was very favorably received and commended by the chairmen and members of the Senate and House committees.)

**Executive Pay Ceilings**—It is almost certain that the proposed elevated ceiling to \$17,500 of those in GS-18 will not be acted upon at this session, but in the not too distant future. This would mean an eventual increase for all those in the upper grades. The present pay ceiling has a tendency to compress all salaries.

**Federal-State Retirement Legislation**—We have been promised that this legislation will be considered di-

(Continued on Page 3)

## No Increase In Dues

At a special Council meeting February 10 it was decided that in view of the extensive membership campaign now under way this is not a good time to act on the proposed dues increase from \$2 to \$3 per year.

## The Employees Almanac

Joe Young's Federal Employees 1955 Almanac mentioned on page 1 of the January OPEDA News Letter can be obtained by sending your orders to: Federal Employees News Digest, PO Box 689, Washington 4, D. C. Prices are: 75 cents single copy; \$12 for 20 copies; and \$27.50 for 50 copies.

The drive for new OPEDA members is moving ahead with vigor. Seventeen key men and women representing every agency of the Department have been appointed to spearhead the drive in their respective agencies. These key people are selecting additional people to help them in giving every eligible employee in the Department an opportunity to join OPEDA.

The OPEDA Membership Committee is assisting each agency in carrying out the membership drive. A new "fact sheet" and other materials have been prepared especially for use in the drive. Your Council has set May 1 as the time when our goal of "5,000 in '55," will be reached.

OPEDA is particularly anxious to recruit new members in all field sta-

(Continued on Page 2)

## NEW MEMBERS

Four recruited by W. G. McGinnies, FS, Columbus, Ohio:

Russell R. Whitten  
Edward H. Wollerman  
John F. Wootten  
Cyrus J. Hay

Three from R. K. Smith, ARS, Minneapolis, Minn.:

Willard A. Algren  
John K. Scott  
Alden L. Klov Dahl

Three from B. C. Stephenson, ARS, Harlingen, Texas:

Adolph Thomae  
I. C. Caswell  
F. G. Bernard

Three from William M. Briggs, Wauwatosa, Wis.:

Virgil B. Hawk  
E. L. McPherron  
Roger E. Sherman

Austin B. Summers, recruited two new members to make OPEDA membership in the SCS office at Gresham, Ore., 100 percent.

## The Public Service Committee Reports

The Association of Land-Grant Colleges is expected to support legislation in the 84th Congress to authorize the exchange of Department and college employees on an assignment basis. The rest of the report will be printed in June issue.



## **Representative Hyde Discusses Investigations And Hearing Examiners**

Representative DeWitt S. Hyde, member of the House Judiciary Committee, chose for discussion at the OPEDA luncheon meeting January 18, two of his bills—one H.R. 29 proposing that U. S. Government hearing examiners be given the same status as administrative judges, the other concerning the conduct of investigation committees (not yet introduced).

He pointed out that actually there are more rules governing the conduct of investigating committees than is generally realized. A more comprehensive set of rules is needed, however, to make clear to the witnesses as well as the committee members just what is being investigated. In that way both will keep within the scope of the investigation.

His bill would define the rights of witnesses and provide for majority control over such matters as subject, authorization for specific investigations, and appointment and dismissal of staff members. It also deals with use of radio and television at investigations, executive sessions, and the use of third parties at investigations.

Concerning his bill on hearing examiners, Mr. Hyde said the main question is who shall appoint such judges—the President, the Office of Administrative Procedure, or a special commission to be appointed by the President. Mr. Hyde believes Congress will give the job to the President.

Such a bill is needed, he said, because there has been such a rapid growth in the field of administrative law that cases should be handled in a judicial manner under court procedure.

During the question and answer period Mr. Hyde was asked about another of his bills on district area public transportation which would provide for one regulatory body for Washington and the metropolitan area. He explained that in suburban Maryland public transportation is practically non-existent, and the Maryland Public Service Commission has decided because of the jurisdictional problem involved that its hands are tied in regard to rates, schedules, and the like. The Maryland Court of Appeals ruled that if a transit company can prove a branch is not making a profit, that service can be eliminated. Federal courts consider the matter from the angle of overall profits of the company.

He suggested that a study be made by a committee which will give its report within six months. He would favor having planning experts from Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia make the study, but this matter has not been decided.

In discussing home rule for the District, Mr. Hyde said chances for voting in federal elections were better than ever. The prospects for the people electing their own city officials, however, are as remote as they were several years ago, he believes.

## **USDA to Revise Classification Standards**

As a follow-up on his recent talk on civil-service standards, reported in the January Newsletter, Harold Leich expressed the Commission's appreciation to USDA for its cooperation in agreeing to undertake the revision of classification standards for forestry, forestry research, and range management and conservation positions. This work will be done jointly by the Forest Service and the Office of Personnel.

Mr. Leich added the following points in amplification of his recent talk: The Civil Service Commission does not ordinarily publish classification standards for occupations having fewer than 50 incumbents. In addition, standards for a number of important Federal occupations with hundreds or thousands of incumbents have not yet been published; for example, budget administration and civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering. Standards for chemical engineering were published in 1949. The scheduling of new classification standards projects for study is based primarily on priority requests from Federal agencies. (See CSC Departmental Circular No. 748.)

The Aeronautical Research Scientist examination for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics provides that applicants who demonstrate that they have made a creative research contribution may be eligible for the next higher grade above the one for which they would otherwise be eligible. This provision does not appear in classification standards.

### **PUBLICITY COMMITTEE NAMED**

The following are members of our Publicity Committee: Milton Mangum, Office of Info, Chairman; Cyrus R. Briggs, AMS; Lance G. Hooks, AMS; Dorothy Martin, FS; Thomas F. McGinty, ARS.

This committee will continue to promote OPEDA through the use of the printed page and other means to the end that all who should know will hear and read about the worthy purposes and activities of our Organization.

### **PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE GOAL**

1. Work for early revision of Civil Service Commission classification standards which are out of date.

2. Continue to assist T. Roy Reid of the Graduate School in an effort to meet in-service training needs of the Department.

3. Study and analyze training programs and compare with industrial practice.

### **DRIVE—From Page 1**

tions of the Department. Therefore, your OPEDA Membership Committee and all assisting in the campaign urge all members to help in recruiting in the field. OPEDA membership is growing. Your organization is becoming more and more influential as times goes along. Check with likely prospects in your area and ask them to join OPEDA.

## **Former FHA Official Addresses OPEDA**

"The problems of impoverished cultivators of the land in Iran cannot be solved by improved methods of husbandry alone," Paul V. Maris, formerly with the Ford Foundation, told the 120 members of OPEDA at their February luncheon meeting. "Peasants must have security of tenure on adequate units of land, credit at reasonable rates and terms, better marketing facilities, and better living conditions in general."

A block system, worked out there to support the Shah's land distribution program, has so improved the lot of the peasants that it merits consideration in other countries. Where the block system has been used the cultivators have doubled the production of the principal crop—cotton—sold it at an increased price through a co-operative association, paid their installments on the purchase of their farms, built school houses and otherwise forged ahead at an unprecedented rate.

The block system was started about two years ago in 12 villages in the Varmín plains area east of Tehran. Key to the system is the village worker trained in the art of helping people to help themselves and to bring in assistance from outside sources when needed. About 15 village workers make up a development block. Each serves about a hundred village families.

Iran is three times the size of California. It lies in the same latitude as the southern third of the United States. Much of the country is arid. About one-third of the cultivated land is irrigated. Inhabitants, numbering about 20 million, depend almost entirely on agriculture.

The people suffer from extreme poverty. Usually the peasant buys on credit at about double the cash prices and pays from 30 to 100 percent interest. Most peasants who furnish only the labor to operate their farms—the oxen, water, land, and seed are furnished by someone else—get only one-fifth of the produce of the farm.

## **OPEDA Lunches at Beltsville**

Some OPEDA officers and staff drove out to Beltsville for a luncheon at the Log Cabin on March 17, which was attended also by about 125 from the Research Center and Plant Industry Station.

Mr. Joe Young, editor of the popular Federal Spotlight column of the Washington Star, addressed the group on current legislative prospects. His remarks were very informative and received with great interest.

This luncheon proved to be so popular that another one is being planned for April.

## **Just Under the Deadline**

*Health Insurance*—Official recommendations will be sent to Congress within a few weeks. Probably no action will be taken until next year.

*Increased Per Diem*—Will probably be raised to \$12 within the very near future.



## Financial Statement

Organization of Professional Employees  
Of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

### Receipts

Cash in bank 12-31-53			\$3,478.95	
	OPEDA Regular Funds	Educational Fund	Combined Total	
Membership dues 1954	\$2,921.00			
“ “ 1955	2,283.00			
“ “ 1956	6.00			
Contributions	34.73			
	\$5,244.73			
Contributions		\$4,330.00		
Advances (117 loans)		1,160.00		
		\$5,490.00	\$10,734.73	
			\$14,213.68	

### Disbursements

Salaries	\$3,509.72	\$2,168.53		
Printing and mimeographing	1,736.26	352.84		
Addressograph service	577.29			
Postage	342.68	288.00		
Office supplies	61.35	66.89		
Telephone service	32.67			
Social Security expense	70.22	43.38		
Miscellaneous	99.73	186.58		
	\$6,429.92	\$3,106.22		
			\$9,536.14	
Cash in bank Dec. 31, 1954			\$4,677.54	

## OPEDA's Name Unchanged

A membership-wide poll on changing the name of OPEDA showed 72.8 percent of those voting opposed. Therefore, the committee, made up of C. A. Logan, ARS; O. R. LeBeau, FSC; J. E. Lee, FHA; G. K. Rule, SCS; and M. D. Kimball, CSS, recommended at the Council meeting February 10, 1955, that the matter be dropped.

The Council accepted the committee's recommendation with a vote of thanks for its work.

Of the 1,056 members voting, 769 opposed any change in the present name while 287 were in favor of a change. On the ballots returned which indicated a preference for suggested changes in name, results were as follows:

Name	No. of votes 1, 2, or 3 choice	Weighted Value
Professional Agricultural Association	182	972
Professional Agricultural Workers	162	882
Professional Agricultural Employees Association	100	623
Agricultural Employees Association	163	746

The weighted value was determined by allowing 3 points for a first place vote, 2 points for a second place vote and 1 point for a third place vote.

### MORRISON PLAN—From Page 1

and benefits to career employees, their dependents, and their survivors, than the Kaplan Plan. Although the Kaplan Plan would increase allowances in a number of circumstances over those of the present CSR system, it does so by superimposing two different kinds of payments—one from the Civil Service Fund and the other from Social Security, in a manner which involves fluctuating annuities and which seems fraught with a number of undesirable complications from the standpoint both of the retired employee and of administrative and accounting procedures. Equivalent or greater advantages can be secured through amending the Civil Service Retirement System.

Moreover, adequate legislation has already been introduced to increase retirement annuities under the CSR system whereas (up to the time of the

Council's action) no legislation had been introduced to carry out the Kaplan Plan. All major Federal employee unions also oppose the Kaplan Plan.

One important contribution of the Kaplan Committee's studies is their appraisal of the actuarial sufficiency of the CSR fund. The committee's analysis indicates that by maintaining employees' contributions to the fund at present levels the fund can support increased annuities not only equal to or exceeding the proposed combined benefits of CSR and SS, but more equitably allocated in accord with the needs of retired employees.

Here is a comparison of the three plans as applied to an employee who retires at the age of 60, with 30 years service, and a high five-year average salary of \$7,200:

Present CSR monthly annuity for

## Report of Auditing Committee

January 11, 1955.

Dear Mr. Henderson:

The Auditing Committee of the Organization of Professional Employees of the Department of Agriculture has examined the books of the organization covering the calendar year 1954. The committee finds that, with several minor exceptions in posting which require adjustment, the books are correct and in balance.

We note that OPEDA has an apparent liability, not exceeding \$1,160, which reflects advances made by members in 1954 to finance the OPEDA Educational Fund under certain conditions, and recommends that an adequate reserve be set aside from the educational fund to liquidate this account in the near future.

We find that a number of recommendations made in the audit report of 1953 have been adopted, including the acquisition of an adding machine, and the practice of carrying receipts forward on the books from month to month in order to facilitate the balancing of accounts and the auditing of records. We recommend that cumulative totals on disbursements also be carried forward from month to month.

With respect to the proposal made at the October Council meeting that a special membership fee of \$5 for three years be adopted, the Auditing Committee does not feel prepared, in view of the limited study of the question up to this time, to make a recommendation; but believes that the proposal would be feasible from the standpoint of record keeping.

Very truly yours,

R. CORBIN DORSEY,  
JOHN L. WELLS.

This report was accepted by the Council.

### HIGHLIGHTS—From Page 1

rectly after the passage of the pay raise legislation. This should be within the next few weeks, although a proposed congressional recess during the first two weeks of April may postpone final action. The two specific bills being supported are H.R. 3687, by Representative Murray, and S. 1041 by Senator Olin Johnston.

**Federal Retirement**—Bills have been introduced by several members providing full retirement privileges after 30 years, regardless of age, and involuntary retirement after 20 years service, also regardless of age. It is not expected that action will be taken on these proposals this year, but there is an excellent chance that some such action will be taken in 1956. The Broyhill and Morrison bills mentioned in OPEDA's Economic Committee report provide for increased payments to employees already retired as well as those who will retire in the future.

retiree, \$270; for surviving widow (beginning at 50), \$135.

Kaplan proposal:

From ages 60 to 65, \$270 for re-

(Continued on Page 4)



## Teamwork Pays

### Spirit of OPEDA

OPEDA is a group expression of the spirit of USDA employees. It is an organization, a brotherhood, bound by ties of common interest in doing a better and better job for Government and country, and bringing to the individual greater dignity, satisfaction, and peace of mind. It strives for civic and personal values that endure. This association of free men and women is definitely interested in the occupational well being of its members; it is no less concerned with how the Department employe discharges his duties. OPEDA stands for "service for pay as much as pay for service." You'll find this principle embedded in the OPEDA Constitution of 1929. It is just as potent as ever on this quarter-century anniversary in 1954.

To render the most effective public service at all times, we are convinced, is an aim of the highest moral value. The organization is always ready to cooperate with Department officials, and in it all members have a medium through which they can collectively and promptly present their views to the administrators. OPEDA members are encouraged to make themselves appreciated through service in whatever useful capacity they are engaged, and to study their work, adapt themselves to conditions and changes, and devote themselves to progress.

### Rewards of Effort

High-pressure methods are no part of OPEDA. Its success and popularity are based on its practical ideals and policies. Consistent effort to obtain reliable information and put it to proper use always assures the organization a ready hearing. This approach to employee and public service problems has won the approval of departmental officials and Congressional committees.

A few of the many present-day objectives are: Equal pay for equal work, elimination of double taxation for Federal employees working in one state but living in another, appropriate recognition of Federal-state co-operative employment towards retirement credit, and the highest standards of performance and integrity for Federal service. Hundreds of bills introduced in Congress affect the interests of departmental employees. All of them have to be studied by OPEDA.—*Excerpts from Roy Miller's article, March 1954.*

**MORRISON PLAN**—From Page 3  
three; \$135 (from 50 to 65), for surviving widow.

After 65 (\$207 CSR, \$108 SS), \$315 for retiree; \$185 for surviving widow. If there is a living spouse aged 65, add \$55 for a total of \$370.

CSR annuity under Morrison Bill, \$450 for retiree; \$225 (at any age), for surviving widow.

OPEDA will actively support the principles expressed in the Morrison Bill as opportunity presents in the 84th Congress.

RALPH W. SHERMAN,  
Chairman, Economic Committee.

## Economic Committee

(By R. W. Sherman, Chm.)

Four of the 1954 objectives of this committee were accomplished. They were:

1. Unemployment insurance extended to Federal employees.
2. Whitten Rider modified to remove features penalizing career employees.
3. Arbitrary restrictions on accumulation and use of leave repealed.
4. Legislation enacted permitting income tax deduction for dependent college students earning more than \$600 per annum.

Its 1955 objectives are:

1. Continue to work for increased pay for Federal employees in line with increased cost of living.
2. Secure action on Kaplan retirement report.
3. Support legislation proposing elimination of multiple state income tax.
4. Continue active support of Federal-state retirement legislation.
5. Propose to House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service introduction and passage of bill to relieve certain inequities in the act, for disability retirees.

Only item 5 is new and the committee recommended that OPEDA introduce and support a bill, which reads as follows: "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the 3d paragraph of Sec. 6 of the Civil Service Retirement Act of May 29, 1930, as amended, is amended to read as follows: If a recovered disability annuitant whose annuity is discontinued shall fail to obtain reemployment in any position included in the provisions of this act, he shall, after the discontinuance of the disability annuity, if eligible for an annuity under the provisions of Section 1 of this act, be entitled to an immediate annuity in accordance with the provisions of such section; otherwise, he shall be considered as having been separated from the service within the meaning of Section 7 of this act as of the date he was retired for disability and shall be entitled to a deferred annuity in accordance with the provisions of such section.

"This act shall take effect....."

The council approved 1955 goals 1, 3, 4, and 5. See page 1, column 1 for action on Kaplan Report.

## OPEDA

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### OPEDA

P. O. Box 381  
Washington 4, D. C.

Sec. 34.65(e), P.L.&R.

## Congressman Lankford Addresses OPEDA

"A bipartisan agency to check and clear Government workers' security and to revise risk dismissals is needed," said Richard E. Lankford (D., Md.), in his luncheon speech before OPEDANS March 15.

Mr. Lankford said that as a member of Congress and as a citizen he was particularly impressed with OPEDA's slogan, not only pay for service but service for pay. "As far as I know," he said, "yours is the only organization which gives such emphasis to that oft-overlooked, but highly important, aim."

He gave a brief history of the Department of Agriculture, mentioning some bits that were new to many of those present. The Department had its beginning 125 years ago when a clerk in the Patent Office began collecting agricultural statistics and distributing seeds which had been gathered by American consuls abroad.

The Department took on regulatory activities, he explained, when an infection of pleuro-pneumonia broke out in cows in Massachusetts and spread across state lines. Since the states could not get together on the problem, farmers called for Federal action. Congress had to pass laws and provide funds to take care of this emergency of 1859.

Mr. Lankford enumerated activities taken on by the Department during the past 25 years in addition to the research, education, and regulation: price supports, acreage allotments, marketing agreements, surplus disposal programs, and soil and water conservation programs.

While the work of the Department is mostly in the nature of services to the farmers, the benefits have not all remained with the farmers. Consumers have more food for a day's pay than in any earlier period in history in spite of an increased population.

Farm output per man-hour has doubled since the 1930's and has increased 25 percent since 1946-47. Today the production of each farm worker supports 17.9 people, while 10 years ago he supported 14 people, and 20 years ago he supported about 8 people.

"As professional employees of the Department," he said, "you carry a heavy responsibility toward seeing that the functions of the Department are carried out as they were intended to be."

## Recruitment Aids

JOIN OPEDA folders are now available from the OPEDA office, PO Box 38, Washington 4, D. C. Large posters for membership promotion are also available there.